

Executive Summary

Indiana has a population of 6,100,000 (2002 estimate), with a voting age population of 4,448,000 (2000 estimate used for purposes of HAVA). Of this population, 4,008,636 were registered to vote as of the November 2002 general election.

Election Administration in Indiana

The Secretary of State serves as Indiana's chief election officer. The Indiana Election Division (IED) is established within the Office of the Secretary of State. The Governor appoints the IED's two co-directors from lists of two or more persons submitted by the state's Democratic and Republican parties. The IED assists the Secretary of State and the Indiana Election Commission (IEC) with the administration of elections. Indiana's local government includes election administration and voter registration offices in each of the state's 92 counties. Each county is divided into election precincts, with a total of 5,602 precincts in Indiana. All 92 counties have a circuit court clerk elected by the voters and a county election board, which includes the circuit court clerk, to administer local elections.

In 2000, the Bipartisan Task Force on Election Integrity was convened. The Task Force was charged with examining the election process in Indiana to ensure that elections were accurate, accessible and secure. After months of study, this bipartisan group reached consensus on several improvements to the election process; the work of the task force took the form of recommendations to the Indiana General Assembly. Many of these recommendations were adopted, including provisional balloting, the establishment of a statewide voter registration system, and the phase out of punch card voting systems. Some of these initiatives were sidelined when appropriations were cut.

With the enactment of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA) and the promise of federal funding to implement its requirements, Indiana's election reform efforts were revitalized. Secretary of State Todd Rokita convened the Vote Indiana Team in February 2003 to move forward with Indiana's election reforms. The Vote Indiana Team consists of 28 Hoosier voters representing a wide variety of ethnic, geographic and tri-partisan political backgrounds. Members met as a whole and in subgroups to address particular subject areas. At all times, meetings were open to the public and time was set aside for public comment. Furthermore, a 30-day public comment period has been scheduled to begin on June 3, 2003 and run through July 3, 2003, in accordance with HAVA requirements. The Preliminary State Plan, all meeting notes, and other Team information can be found at www.sos.IN.gov, under "Vote Indiana Team Information." Please see Section 13 of the Preliminary State Plan to review simple procedures for registering public comment.

HAVA requires the submission of a state plan detailing how HAVA requirements will be met and how HAVA monies will be utilized. This Executive Summary outlines the major initiatives of the Team and the plan for distributing the associated funding.

Voting Systems

A new Quantity Purchase Agreement (QPA) will be issued. All Indiana certified voting system vendors will be eligible to enter into the QPA. HAVA requires each county to acquire one voting system with accessible equipment per polling place. Punch card and lever machines will be replaced. Funding will be distributed as a reimbursement to counties for the costs incurred in purchasing a voting system. Eligibility for reimbursement will be determined after review of an application to the Indiana Election Division, certification of polling place accessibility, and cooperation with a local advisory council to choose accessible polling places. The current funding formula described in the Plan is based on estimates of funding outlined in HAVA. The formula could change as the result of actual funding appropriated by Congress over the next several years. Please refer to Sections 1 (A) and 6 (A) of the preliminary state plan for further information.

Statewide Voter Registration System

A consultant and statewide steering committee will assist the Secretary of State and Indiana Election Division in the development and implementation of a statewide voter registration system. A Request For Proposal (RFP) will be issued for the selection of a vendor to create the system. The steering committee will help guide the creation and implementation of the system. The committee will be comprised of Team members and representatives from the clerks' and voter registration officials' associations. The system will also interact with computer systems of the Bureau of Motor Vehicles, Indiana State Department of Health and Department of Correction. Please refer to Sections 1 (B), Section 6 (B), and Section 8 (1) of the preliminary plan for further information.

Training and Education

Training will be geared toward election officials and pollworkers. Voter educational opportunities will also be created. Please see Section 1 (F), Section 3, Section 6 (C), Section 8 (2 a,b,c), and Section 10 of the preliminary state plan for further information.

Statewide Grievance Procedure

A statewide grievance procedure will be established to handle complaints that may involve voting system and polling place accessibility, allegations of fraud, and other voting or registration processes. Please see Section 1 (E), Section 6 (E), Section 8 (3), and Section 9 of the preliminary state plan for further information.

Provisional Balloting

Provisional balloting will be available as a safety net for the voter who may have erroneously been removed from the voter list and to guard against fraudulent voting practices. A free access system will be available for a provisional voter to check the

status of the provisional ballot (e.g. find out whether the ballot was counted). Please see Section 1 (D), Section 6 (D), and Section 8 (4) of the preliminary state plan for further information.

Accessibility

A comprehensive polling place accessibility study will be undertaken to guide local jurisdictions in making improvements. The Secretary of State will apply for funding to help counties improve the accessibility of particular polling places. A voter will be able to cast a ballot privately and independently. Please see Section 4, Section 6 (HHS grants and F), Section 8 (5), and Section 10 of the preliminary state plan for further information.

In summary, the efforts of the Vote Indiana Team and the dedication of Indiana's election officials will produce positive changes and set the course for Indiana's election reform efforts for years to come.